

Durban HIV-positive family visit White House

**SNE MAKHANYA
DURBAN BUREAU**

AN HIV-positive Durban family of three recently came back from the White House podium in the U.S. after they were selected as some of the 8 000 adults and 500 children benefiting from the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (Pepfar) in South Africa.

Thandazile Darby (35) and her children Emily (5) and Lewis (4) were the only family present at the White House on International World Aids Day alongside senators, congressmen, ambassadors, doctors and reporters.

"I thanked the U.S. President, George Bush, for the roll-out of Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) and informed him about how helpful it is," Darby said.

She said that after her husband died two years ago, her in-laws couldn't afford the high cost any longer.

"The medicine used to be very expensive. I used to have to decide between taking our medicine and putting food in our bellies. Now I can afford to buy food for my family and we can keep taking our medicine to stay healthy."

The U.S. dedicated about R1 billion to Pepfar activities across South Africa in 2005 and plans to, among other things, support the nationwide development of palliative care programmes, improve programmes that address nutritional aspects of HIV and Aids management, and assist development of effective paediatric Aids care.

Dr Janet Giddy, HIV programmes co-ordinator at McCord Hospital where Darby and the children were helped, said that currently, 85 new patients enrol monthly.

Darby said she has lost many



Photo: S'BU MFEKA

The Darby family of Durban, who visited the White House on World Aids Day, tuck into muffins during a media briefing at the U.S. Embassy in Durban. From left, family physician Dr Helga Holst holds Lewis, mother Thandazile and Emily. The Darby family is now on ARVs through the U.S. President George W. Bush's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief.

friends through advising about the Aids pandemic, but she recommends that people use ART amid controversy of

their side effects.

"I strongly recommend it for kids as well, Emily and Lewis are like normal kids."

Like many others, Darby felt strongly about testing for HIV status.

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